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Salvatore Natoli, Nietzsche e il teatro della filosofia. Milan: Feltrinelli, 2011. 191 pp.

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Book Reviews

Salvatore Natoli, *Nietzsche e il teatro della filosofia*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 2011. 191 pp. ISBN: 978-8807722912. Paperback, €10.

Salvatore Natoli's monograph, *Nietzsche e il teatro della filosofia* (Nietzsche and the Theatre of Philosophy), is part of a rich Italian tradition of Nietzsche studies that has developed over the past forty years. It has developed in two main directions: the first, of a hermeneutic orientation, has its best-known representative in Gianni Vattimo; the second, of a historical orientation, continues the work on the critical edition of Friedrich Nietzsche's writings begun by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. Natoli's approach falls fully under the hermeneutic orientation.

As Natoli rightly points out, after dealing with Nietzsche extensively during the twentieth century, philosophers have recently had less to say about him. The causes of this are not too mysterious: Nietzsche's philosophy is deeply tied to a century—the twentieth century—which anticipated torments, tensions, and abysses. If it is therefore unsurprising that contemporary philosophers have somewhat distanced themselves from Nietzsche, aside from the historical or hermeneutical perspective, Natoli's project is otherwise perfectly understandable and very specific: to make explicit, through Nietzsche's philosophy, the link between "hermeneutics" and "genealogy" (19), two concepts typical of the twentieth century.

If it is clear what Nietzsche (and Natoli) mean by genealogy, it is more difficult to outline the relationships between hermeneutics and the complexity of Nietzsche's thought. As is known, genealogy is a particular disposition of philosophical inquiry that Nietzsche uses in many works, while hermeneutics is a philosophical orientation that, in its different twentieth-century formulations, refers to some of Nietzsche's arguments, especially about the issue of truth. Specifically, Natoli makes a strong interpretive claim in considering hermeneutics as a position in some way equivalent to Nietzschean perspectivism: he claims that "the perspective is a pointed look, a cut that opens up dimensions" (15, my translations throughout), while genealogy means going back to the root, to the origin and, as such, "it investigates the implant and the unfolding of various processes" (15). In this context, Natoli proceeds in a Heideggerian spirit, stating that "hermeneutics, then, even before being a method, is a condition of existence: it coincides with the inevitable stance that follows our being placed. It does not depend on a decision but, if anything, it motivates the decisions we make and of which we do not always know the how and why" (15).

In practice, therefore, hermeneutics is not a method, nor is it a philosophical orientation, but looks more like an acknowledgment, like the manifestation of the awareness of the "openness" in which we find ourselves, to paraphrase Heidegger in *Being and Time*. Therefore, it coincides with the awareness of the perspectival limit that characterizes our views of the world and, consequently, insists on acknowledging our inability to grasp the truth. It is a limit that, in Heidegger's hermeneutics, is considered constitutive of epistemology and its heuristic possibilities.

In this sense, then, philosophy can only be "theater"—that is, the staging of worldviews, all of which are equally legitimate. Exploring this was certainly one of Nietzsche's temptations, grasped and expressed with interpretive fineness by hermeneutical readings of the kind that inspire Natoli. Addressing Nietzschean philosophy, hermeneutic philosophy—especially as developed by Martin Heidegger, Hans Georg Gadamer, and Gianni Vattimo—generally adopts a twofold theoretical approach. First, it argues that Nietzsche does not affirm any theory of truth, but rather expresses entirely relativist positions (this would be the sense of the equivalence of all perspectives mentioned above). Second, it engages in interpretive work intended to weaken the arguments and theses—such as that of the will to power—which appear to have nothing perspectival about them, at least not in

the radical sense. The “other” Nietzsche, or the positive philosophy that Nietzsche expresses in the metaphysical, ontological, cosmological, and anthropological fields, is largely overlooked or otherwise declared contradictory and inconsistent with the critical and deconstructive side of his thought.

This is precisely the spirit with which Natoli addresses the issue of the “will to power,” the theoretical center of the book and, along with the other positive theses enunciated by Nietzsche, a concrete test case for hermeneutic interpretations (87ff.). Natoli’s strategy lies in interpreting an eminently ontological thesis, “the world is will to power,” as a merely transcendental one—that is, merely a way of conceptualizing the world. In this way, the thesis perhaps becomes consistent with the fundamental assumptions of hermeneutics, but Natoli recognizes that it becomes problematic with respect to Nietzsche’s deconstructive claims about the physical world. For, on Natoli’s interpretation, when Nietzsche posits that the world is will to power, he is not predicating something of something else, he is not positing a given; in other words, he is not adopting an object that is independent of the assertion or external to the assertion. When Nietzsche says that the world is will to power, he is saying that the world is made up of the set of assertions that declare their existence by virtue of their *consistence* in being; that is, in themselves. The will to power, as an interpretation of each occurrence, is not equivalent, nor can it be equivalent to any interpretation, but it must be understood as a *declaration of being* (87–88). There can be only two possible outcomes of these assumptions. The first is less attentive to the Nietzschean letter; the second is more honest about the texts. Either it must be denied that Nietzsche proposes a positive metaphysics or it must be accepted that Nietzsche’s writings express markedly contradictory positions regarding not only the details but the very heart of his philosophy. Natoli chooses the second option by detecting and marking the contradiction as follows:

Nietzsche tells us that the world is not a reality, but an invention. . . . Conversely, however, there is another group of passages, . . . in which this invention, which is the world, is instead named and defined. . . . On the one hand, the world is “a falsehood that moves over and over again and never comes close to the truth”; on the other hand, this very world has a name, which is not a conjecture but a solution: it is will to power. This ambiguity does not allow Nietzsche to explicitly thematize the dialectical value contained in its thinking. . . . This is because, despite everything, in Nietzsche there is still *the naive residue* of a will understood as a vital force. (81–82)

Natoli, therefore, believes that there are two Nietzsches that interpreters must address; indeed, there are two Nietzsches that seem to be opposites of each other. This, I would suggest, is too much, even for an author like Nietzsche.

Certainly, Nietzsche would never have traded his interpretation of the world for another. The thesis, “the world is will to power,” is just as peremptory as his other famous theses. The fact that Nietzsche understood the will to power as a description of a state of affairs—rather than as a transcendental, as Natoli suggests (88)—can be seen from many passages of the published works and unpublished notes in which the thesis is argued and developed. The interests that Nietzsche cultivated, for a long time, in the natural sciences, and especially in physics, chemistry, biology, and cosmology, in search of empirical confirmation for his thesis also support this idea (I have dealt with these issues extensively in my *Il problema della percezione nella filosofia di Nietzsche* [Milan: AlboVersorio, 2005]; also see Jorg Salaquarda, “Nietzsche und Lange,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 7 [1978]: 236–60).

Natoli establishes a close relationship, almost to the point of assimilation, between two metaphysical principles that Nietzsche keeps separate, the will to power and eternal return. On Natoli’s interpretation, the will to power, the basic principle of being, is what happens, and so it is event, being in the form of event. In its occurrence, it is also what returns. The will to power is therefore a condition of being that should not be confused with the individual identifications that being assumes. The effort to maintain the will to power as an empty concept is directly related to Natoli’s explicit position that escapes any naturalistic determination.

Now, in the literature there are numerous studies, based on Nietzsche's published and unpublished texts, which show that he had in mind a concept of will power that is far from empty. These same studies show that, while Nietzsche's contradictions are certainly not rare, still he cannot be accused of being, at the same time, a relativist skeptic and a descriptive metaphysician. To understand his thinking more coherently, then, we should follow his (disordered) arguments while keeping in mind, as our guiding thread, the question of truth.

Natoli, in his examination of the will to power, rightly calls into question Nietzsche's idea of truth. From his early writings onward, Nietzsche considers truth at two levels: on the one hand, he questions the concept of truth ("What is truth?"), while, on the other hand, he wonders what it is that we can come to know. If it is possible to identify a constant element in Nietzsche's thought, the point around which the whole of his epistemology revolves, it is precisely the idea that truth, in the form of correspondence, is not accessible to human beings. What follows, above all, is that what we may never know are the conditions of the possibility of our knowledge. Of course, regarding all those "partial" truths that have meaning and value precisely because they make up the human world, we can conjecture what we please and some arguments will be better than others because they stand on a stipulation.

Notwithstanding this radical skepticism about the very conceivability of the transcendental, Nietzsche is perfectly able to tell us what the principle of the living is. It is the will to power: an intentional act and an instinct, will and power, or, better yet, a will that expresses itself in the search of its own growth and of the manifestation of its growth. Hermeneutic readings, including that developed by Natoli, are thus more radical than Nietzsche himself, who, when arguing about truth, expressed positions oriented toward skepticism about the very possibility of knowing the transcendental while, within this limit, proposing a precise view of the world.

Tiziana Andina
University of Turin
tiziana.andina@unito.it

Katrina Mitcheson, *Nietzsche, Truth and Transformation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. ix + 188 pp. ISBN: 978-1-137-35705-2. Cloth, \$110.

Katrina Mitcheson's *Nietzsche, Truth and Transformation* is a significant contribution to Nietzsche scholarship that focuses on explicating the influence of embodied and cultural practice on Nietzsche's conception of truth. The book's principal question is how Nietzsche's call for an overcoming of the ascetic ideal that permeates contemporary European cultural and moral habits is possible. Mitcheson argues that this overcoming involves a deliberate transformation of our conception of truth into a more practical understanding, and traces the possibility for this transformation through the importance of perspectivism and "will to power" for Nietzsche's conception of truth. The core aim of the book is to show how, through Nietzsche's philosophical analyses, the philosophical conception of truth is influenced not only by theoretical consideration, but also by culture and habit, and that these in turn are influenced by it.

The book is divided into six chapters, the first three of which are devoted to an overview of Nietzsche's conception of truth as it develops in his philosophy, along with an account of perspectivism and the drive to truth. The final three chapters expand Mitcheson's proposed reading of truth in Nietzsche's philosophy, providing an interpretation of will to power and the process of becoming a free spirit built on the insights of this reading.

The first chapter tracks Nietzsche's conception of truth as it changes through his early and middle work. Mitcheson's interpretation is relatively conventional: Nietzsche's position on truth significantly shifts from the possibility of correspondence after *The Birth of Tragedy*, to an insistence

on the necessity of illusion and error for life in *On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense*, and to an emphasis on the importance of drives for truth and their influence on the subject's habits and behaviors in *Human, All Too Human* and *Daybreak*. Mitcheson concludes that this development leads Nietzsche to an embodied understanding of truth in terms of the subject's situated contribution to experience, which is based on the interpretation of drives. Mitcheson's account here is comprehensive, especially in highlighting Nietzsche's mistrust and criticisms of metaphysical theories. However, while she traces the influence of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Lange on Nietzsche's epistemology, similar influences are not considered for Nietzsche's understanding of drives, where a discussion of figures like Herder or Schiller would be warranted.

Mitcheson addresses perspectivism and its implications for Nietzsche's conception of truth in the second chapter. There she examines both the epistemological claim that truth is perspectival and the extension of this type of perspectivism to ontology, through conceiving of the world as multiplicity of perspectives. She rejects a radical relativism about perspectival truth, pragmatist-type positions, and the idea that Nietzsche's conception of truth is determined by power. Although otherwise cogent in criticizing these stances, her argument against the latter idea seems unconvincing. She cites both Rüdiger Grimm and Wolfgang Müller-Lauter as two commentators who defend this idea, and writes that to take such a position "is to confuse Nietzsche's analysis of what has often been taken to be true, which is that which has maximized power for a particular perspective, or provided the only outlet of the expression of power for a weak perspective, with his own criterion for truth" (49). This criticism is persuasive if we consider power only in terms of its feeling or emotive aspects, but a more general characterization is less susceptible to this criticism. An objector might respond that if Nietzsche's criterion of truth is power, it is specifically the power of the greatest, fullest perspective that he advocates, contrasted with the power of weaker perspectives that Mitcheson highlights. Mitcheson does not address a response like this, but she draws on a similar intuition in arguing for her own interpretation: Nietzsche's perspectival truth is a modest form of correspondence theory "in which what truth corresponds to is the world as it is viewed from various perspectives" (50), rather than correspondence to things in themselves. Given that perspectives will contradict each other, properly understanding the world in its totality of perspectives as truth "requires the right art of interpretation" (50)—that is, having the best, fullest interpretation, through which apparent contradictions might be resolved.

The third chapter focuses on a conception of the drive to truth that is inextricably related to our practical lives, since "being a perspective itself, truth has an existence as a cultural practice and habit within us" (59). Mitcheson likewise stresses that the idea of a "real world" exists in us and our culture foremost as an ingrained habit and practice. It is not enough—but neither is it irrelevant—to theoretically recognize the incoherence of this distinction. Mitcheson here criticizes Maudemarie Clark's answer in *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 112–14) to the distinction as insufficient, claiming that "overcoming the idea of the 'real world' is not a simple question of denying its coherence" (70). The habits and prejudices associated with this distinction and the ascetic will to truth must also be overcome. However, Mitcheson also rejects the Heideggerian position that claims that the will to art "comes to be dominant in the place of the will to truth" (70). The will to truth is not to be subordinated, but overcome in its existing form through the concrete development of a new practice "that allows for the possibility of a transformation of the will to truth and its relationship to other drives" (72). Mitcheson's approach here is admirable for how it consistently combines the theoretical considerations in Nietzsche's philosophy with their practical conclusions, and her own reading resides in the middle of the interpretive spectrum, favoring both the existential and theoretical considerations of the conception of truth in Nietzsche's philosophy.

Chapter 4 provides a comparison between the Platonic practice of truth and Nietzsche's alternative practice. Mitcheson argues that truth, for Plato, is a rational, dialectic activity that minimizes the role of the body. The method of dialectic involved is conducive to a form of truth practice that "assumes a fixed essence of things" (85) and "requires terms to have determinate meanings . . . and

thus requires that the things these terms represent are themselves fully determinate" (85). For Nietzsche, Mitcheson claims, there is rather "a continuous state of becoming in which interpretations are formed and destroyed" (89). The practice of his conception of truth does not aim at an end point or ultimate closure. Rather, the aim of the practice is only to "hope to understand the process of interpretations that are subject to reinterpretation over time" (90). Fittingly, the primary methodological tool used in this understanding is genealogy, which allows us to trace the origin and operation of an interpretation throughout this process. According to Mitcheson, where once a belief or position was rejected on the grounds of, for example, theoretical contradiction, it now properly comes to be "destabilized through an appropriate use of genealogy, and more importantly, it is challenged by a new awareness of the variety of perspectives" (91). What is particularly effective in this chapter, and exemplifies her methodology, is Mitcheson's explicit linking of an embodied practice like music with truth: "the warm music of the south is the music of the body and the senses and the multiple perspectives of the living world. It is required in Nietzsche's practice of truth" (98). An analysis of truth through these direct practical examples is a particular strength of Mitcheson's approach. Indeed, it could have been developed further, especially as it might clarify the degree to which Nietzsche's aesthetics influences his conception of truth.

The fifth chapter offers an extended interpretation of "will to power" in Nietzsche's philosophy. Mitcheson rejects readings of will to power as a reductive psychological principle, and is more sympathetic to a nonreductive interpretation of it as an explanation of psychology, "explaining the activity of drives, without reducing them to a desire for power" (108). But her own reading is epistemologically grounded, treating will to power as a "regulative principle" (106) that must be applied to an understanding of the world. Instead of establishing will to power directly as a metaphysical thesis, Mitcheson thinks that Nietzsche offers will to power as the best holistic perspectival interpretation by applying it "case by case" (127). Although most of the cases he considers are psychological analyses of human beliefs, customs, and actions, the scope of the principle extends to life itself. Mitcheson's interpretation is therefore structured epistemologically in its establishment and proof, but its implications tend toward the ontological. Although she maintains that will to power is an epistemological theory, her reading of will to power nonetheless resembles the structure of John Richardson's preceding ontological interpretation in *Nietzsche's System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) by citing several structural features of an ontological will to power: will to power is to be considered not as singular, but as "multiple *wills* to power" (121), and although to treat "the character of life's manifold perspectives as all aiming towards or intending power" (118) is to ascribe it with intentionality, will to power is not to be considered a subject, or a doer apart from its activity. Mitcheson's interpretation of will to power is commendable because it synthesizes the fundamental intuitions of limited and extended interpretations of will to power while avoiding the criticisms of both: it combines the broad explanatory power of ontological readings like Richardson's, or that of Richard Schacht in *Nietzsche* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), with the perspectival self-awareness and criticisms of metaphysics of more limited epistemological or psychological interpretations like Clark's.

The last chapter describes the development of the "free spirit" through Nietzsche's practice of truth. Here, Mitcheson deals with a number of issues relating to the self in Nietzsche's conception of the free spirit. If we understand the self as a changing multiplicity of drives, then what determines that change, and how is a well-developed, coherent self possible? Mitcheson's answer emphasizes the role of change at all points in shaping the self: "a practice is not isolated but influences a nexus of habits and drives. Hence, through the gradual alteration of some wills to power, the interrelation of these wills to power, and thus the self they make up, is altered. The locus of change is thus itself multiple and changing" (135). Later in this chapter, Mitcheson again shows how interwoven truth is with bodily practices in her description of its relation to the drives: "[t]he truths of the free spirit are the truths of a new sensualism, which they discover themselves through knowing their own body" (149). Truths are therefore not, foremost, epistemological doctrines. Rather, they are lived,

embodied experiences of the perspectives or drives constituting the subject. But if there are to be free spirits, must they explicitly follow Nietzsche's doctrines? Mitcheson denies this on the grounds that the process is much more organic: "It is not by accepting Nietzsche's teaching that the world is will to power that a spirit becomes free, but by finding this out for themselves, understanding this and its radical implications in relation to themselves" (157). Thus, through advocating a genealogical, bodily truthfulness with oneself, Mitcheson's reading remains consistent through to its conclusion.

Mitcheson's book is an exercise in productively combining disparate ends of the spectrum of interpretations on truth, perspectivism, and will to power in Nietzsche's philosophy. Mitcheson excels in bringing to the forefront the direct practical and cultural consequences of Nietzsche's conception of truth, and her argument will be rewarding for any scholar concerned with joining theory and practice. Although some of these practical and cultural consequences may not be as thoroughly developed in the book as one might have hoped, it surely highlights a task that will be an important part of future scholarship.

Ruud Thomas Burke
University College Cork
Ruud.Burke@umail.ucc.ie

Julian Young, ed., *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 258 pp. ISBN: 978-1-107-04985-7. Hardback, £55.00/\$90.00.

This excellent collection, edited by Julian Young, features ten essays on the topic of Nietzsche's valuation of the individual and the implications this has for notions of community. The book features contributions from some of the most respected contemporary Nietzsche scholars, and each essay displays rigorous analysis while being written in an engaging style.

Many of these contributions are evidently written in response to Young's own provocative reading of Nietzsche as a communitarian thinker in *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), and Young presents aspects of this reading in the opening essay. He argues that Nietzsche's "liberal communitarianism" (8) stems from his intellectual inheritance from Wagner of a distinctly Hegelian project, that of synthesizing the need for common meaning with the desire for liberal individual rights. Young provides a close reading of Wagner, identifying the liberal aspect of Nietzsche's communitarianism in a form of "soft power" (9)—namely, the capacity to inspire, rather than coerce, the collective toward a shared ideal. This soft power opens the space for reconciliation between the desires of the individual and the goals of the community at large. Young contends that Wagner's early Hegelianism "appears virtually word for word" in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (16). More controversially and less convincingly, he extends this liberal communitarianism across Nietzsche's entire corpus. In particular, for Young, we should understand Nietzsche's free spirits as "agents of change" (25), exemplary individuals who both establish and question the evaluative boundaries of the collective ethical imperative.

Hans Sluga's chapter investigates Nietzsche's call for a new "great politics" (32). Drawing comparisons with Plato, Sluga argues that Nietzsche views the lack of a socially recognized order of rank, a corollary of modern democratic pluralism, as the inception of political nihilism. Sluga locates this diagnosis in *Human, All Too Human*, where Nietzsche's critique of modern democracy inaugurates his concern with the tensions between political processes and the prospect of cultural flourishing. For Sluga, however, it is in *Beyond Good and Evil* that Nietzsche floats the possibility of reconciliation between the two, with the prospect of exceptional individuals instigating a new political relationship. Sluga argues that Nietzsche sees the European notion of the nation-state as something that should and will be abolished. While taking Nietzsche's recommendation to be problematic, Sluga concludes that his diagnosis is profound.

How convincing one takes Sluga's argument to be depends on the literalness one thinks should be placed on the phrase "great politics." By *Beyond Good and Evil*, is it not employed purely as a metaphor? This would accord with Ken Gemes and Chris Sykes's approach in the following essay. Like Young, Gemes and Sykes emphasize Nietzsche's kinship with Wagner, identifying the problem of meaning as central to both. Nietzsche is identified as conducting an anthropology of communities' answers to the problem of meaning, or, rather, their creations of illusions to act as semblances of meaning. In his early works they take Nietzsche to hold that the foundations for the kind of cultural consecration necessary for the provision of collective meaning can be provided through myth, in the place of metaphysics. But, contra Young, Gemes and Sykes argue that Nietzsche develops away from his early communitarianism: first, toward an (ultimately pessimistic) investigation into the possibility of a scientific culture that provides meaning, and then by advocating a narrower individualism. For Gemes and Sykes, then, Nietzsche's aspiration for communitarian cultural flourishing died at Bayreuth, and with *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche makes a final attempt to provide a life-affirming "mythology" (72) for the flourishing of his intended recipients, now of a far more limited scope—namely, only truly exemplary individuals.

Here one might wonder whether Nietzsche's thought of the eternal recurrence might better fit this need for the provision of a mythology. Although Nietzsche marks out *Zarathustra* as the jewel of his oeuvre (*EH* P:4), he also declares the eternal recurrence, which receives its most sustained treatment in *Zarathustra*, to be its (indeed his) most fundamental thought. Might it be the case that, rather than the work providing the "myth," it is the thought?

Kathleen Higgins's chapter looks for ways to understand the celebration of individualism in Nietzsche's works without overlooking the communities from which such individuals originate. Nietzsche appears to make a *prima facie* distinction between the life denial of the collective and the exemplary individual's solitude, but Higgins contends that it is still an "idealized" (82) community which Nietzsche desires, one where its commonality is understood in ways alien to the instincts of the "herd," such as the sense of vitality of its members, seeing the further individuation of its members as a desirable end, and the dynamic of agonism between particular individuals. These commonalities are what drive and promote true cultural flourishing, Higgins contends.

Jessica N. Berry understands Nietzsche's sense of community in a similar way to Higgins, using the word "virtual" to describe it. Berry's concern is to analyze Nietzsche's idealization of a specific mindset necessary for the affirmative pursuit of scientific inquiry. Renouncing the "ascetic" notions of objective inquiry (95), Berry identifies a principle of editorial skill in Nietzsche's ideal scientific investigator, Goethe, that gives methodological primacy to genuine human perspectives over the dogmatic desire to view the world objectively. This does not, however, reduce Nietzsche's valuations to relativism, Berry contends. On her view, Nietzsche's criticism is directed not against all notions of truth, but against forms of unconditional epistemophilia as ends in themselves, which encourage spiritual "eunuchery" as opposed to spiritual health (100). Berry sees Nietzsche as deriving this picture of the scientific ideal from Goethe's naturalistic writings, in particular "Theory of Colours," with its assertions about the irreducibility of the subject in relation to the optics of perception. Just as our perceptions of objects belong to the eye, for scientific inquiry to be nonascetic it must in a certain sense belong to the individual "I."

In their chapter, Maudemarie Clark and Monique Wonderly argue against Young's communitarian claim that value resides exclusively with the community throughout Nietzsche's corpus. While Young is right, they argue, to acknowledge the capacity of the individual exemplar to provide cultural stimulation, they contend that while exemplary individuals are instrumentally valuable in relation to the community, it does not follow, as Young claims, that these individuals possess value exclusively by means of this relation. Intrinsic value need not be pitted against instrumental value, when exemplary individuals could have both.

Ivan Soll's chapter discusses Nietzsche's criticism of altruism. Nietzsche thinks that the individual's fundamental motivations for all behavior are egoistic, Soll argues. Given this, a Christian-moral

criterion for motivational behavior, in terms of “pure” altruism, would have to identify all behavior as evil, thus making it largely useless for the kinds of moral evaluations that fall outside of such thinking (152). But Soll argues that a mistaken absolutism is found in Nietzsche too, insofar as he advocates an absolutist position of pure egoism at the other end of the spectrum, without recognizing the points of gradation in which reconciliation between egoism and altruism is both attainable and practical. Soll nonetheless argues that Nietzsche’s supposed rejection of altruism could have some indirect forms of communitarian benefit.

More problematic is Soll’s conception of the will to power, which appears to underpin his understanding of Nietzschean egoism. On Soll’s view, the “ultimate” Nietzschean good (147) is the *experience* of power, rather than its possession (150). This would seem to run counter to the valutive force of key Nietzschean themes, such as the figure of the “last man” in *Zarathustra*, and the capacity for flourishing through suffering. These examples suggest a very different valutive schema to that which Soll identifies in the will to power, one that sees mere feeling as subordinate (often obstructive) to genuine possession of power, recommending even antihedonic pursuits of forms of hardship for the higher end of possessing genuine power.

Christine Swanton’s essay also makes the case for the communitarian benefit of Nietzsche’s valorization of the exemplary individual. She suggests we distinguish two forms of egoism, “mature” and “immature” (180), as a means of reconciling Nietzsche’s individualism with communitarian flourishing. Swanton argues for more nuanced positions between both the purely self-serving and the demands of pure altruism, which she argues are both reductive, “immature” ways of viewing Nietzsche’s model of self-cultivation. For her, his model is compatible with working *for* one’s fellows within a community.

Jeff Malpas explores the possibility of a topographical reading of Nietzsche, focusing on the relation between Nietzsche’s thoughts and the places where those thoughts came to him. Rather than explaining away Nietzsche’s topographic examples as metaphorical or poetic, Malpas treats them as evidence of an integral link between conditions within the natural world and the character of Nietzsche’s reflective thinking. By providing such a link, Malpas argues that the apparent tensions between the individual and the community are dissolved. In particular, he claims that as the references to the topographic increase in Nietzsche’s work, the tensions between individual and community become less rigid (though providing some textual support would have strengthened this argument), so as to accommodate for the dynamic interplay between place and thinking. In particular, Venice is identified by Malpas as characteristic of Nietzsche’s thinking about place, as an environment that manifests contradiction, ambivalence, and even (ant-) agonism toward itself.

The essay by John Richardson is one of the strongest contributions of the collection. Nietzsche identifies language as our most communitarian feature, making it a threat to the exemplar’s individuality. As expressions of human drives with the aim of being understood, words always fall short of their full intention in terms of relaying the meaning of a drive. Given the infinite possibilities for unique individual constitutions of drives, the more general the term, the less it expresses the true character of the drive. This, Richardson contends, is Nietzsche’s problem of the common, a foreign aggregate of meaning imposed by language upon what Nietzsche takes as the inborn meanings of drives. By establishing false equations of commonality between ontological particulars, the common, both at the level of the community and the individual’s inborn capacity for the collective instinct, reduces and abbreviates what Nietzsche takes to be important valutive individuations. In this light, Richardson contends that genuine freedom and autonomy are possible—even if only for a select few individuals—through a “revised relation to language” (233). Because Nietzsche himself uses language to communicate his own ideas, Richardson argues, it is clear that Nietzsche wants to retain language, in a form that generalizes in a far less leveling way, and allows for the possibility of individuation. In other words, this “revised relation” amounts to reducing the effect of the common on language (233).

Richardson suggests shifting how we approach the common by reference to Nietzsche's psychology of types, based upon origins and sources. However, this does not seem to constitute such a radical revision of the common that it would ease Nietzsche's own normative concerns. I feel Nietzsche himself postulates a more severe vision of overcoming the common than Richardson's recommendations, evinced in his lament in *Twilight of the Idols* that we cannot be wholly rid of God while we keep faith in grammar (*TI* "'Reason' in Philosophy" 5). Just because Nietzsche himself uses words to communicate his thoughts, the problem of the common included, does not mean that he would not subject his own communicative efforts to the problem he identifies and expresses.

This wonderful collection offers in each of its featured essays advanced analyses of the fundamental questions at work in Nietzsche's philosophy, as well as innovative argumentation for their respective positions. It will therefore be indispensable to any informed discussion of the tensions in Nietzsche's work involving notions of individual and community. Any student or scholar of Nietzsche seeking to explore these complex but important issues would profit from consulting this collection.

Richard J. Elliott
Heythrop College, London
Richard.Elliott@heythropcollege.ac.uk

Johann Figl, *Nietzsche und die Religionen. Transkulturelle Perspektiven seines Bildungs- und Denkweges*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007. 396 pp. ISBN: 978-3-11-019065-6. Cloth, €69.95.

Johann Figl, *Nietzsche—Meditationen. Das Kloster, das Meer und die "neue" Unendlichkeit*. Vienna: LIT, 2007. 134 pp. ISBN: 978-3-7000-0773-9. Paper, €9.90.

"Nietzsche and Religion" is not an unusual topic in Nietzsche scholarship. Yet most studies on this topic limit themselves to his relationship to Christianity or Buddhism. Few people have systematically examined Nietzsche's reception of other non-Christian religions. Johann Figl's 2007 monograph *Nietzsche und die Religionen. Transkulturelle Perspektiven seines Bildungs- und Denkweges* fills this gap. While most recent publications concerning Nietzsche's relationship to religions are philosophically oriented, Figl's book takes a strictly historical approach. It not only is a reconstruction of Nietzsche's knowledge of *various* religions and their influence on his philosophy, but also aims to outline the early history of *Religionswissenschaft* reflected in Nietzsche's *Bildungsweg*. Such an ambitious project requires intimate knowledge of Nietzsche's life and thought as well as nineteenth-century German scholarship in which he was trained. Figl, an expert on Nietzsche as well as religious studies, is one of the few scholars who can take on such a task. The outcome, *Nietzsche und die Religionen* (henceforth *NR*), meets our expectations.

After a short introduction in which Figl explains the aims and structure of his book, *NR* is organized into four chapters. These four chapters can be divided into two main parts. The first part, which includes the first three chapters, offers a comprehensive survey of Nietzsche's extensive occupation with non-European cultures and non-Christian religions, first while he was a school and university student and later as a professor of philology in Basel. As the subtitle indicates, one of Figl's major commitments in this book is that a transcultural dimension is fundamental to Nietzsche's entire philosophical project. In the second part, constituted by the fourth chapter, Figl engages with the issue of how this transcultural dimension is reflected in Nietzsche's published writings, from *The Birth of Tragedy* to his later works. These four chapters are followed by a catalogue of sources and documents concerning Nietzsche's education and reading, a bibliography, and a general index to the book, all of which provide many useful avenues for further study.

Figl is not alone in emphasizing Nietzsche's cultural pluralism. In his 1996 monograph *Orient—Okzident. Nietzsches Versuch einer Loslösung vom europäischen Weltbild* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996), for instance, Andrea Orsucci also takes Nietzsche's opposition to Eurocentrism as his point of departure. Both Figl and Orsucci maintain that Nietzsche's understanding of cultures and religions is a product of the intellectual atmosphere of Nietzsche's own age. However, unlike Orsucci, who emphasizes the radical breaks in Nietzsche's thinking about religions, Figl focuses upon the continuity of Nietzsche's development. Although he agrees with Orsucci that Nietzsche's reception of nineteenth-century religious, anthropological, and ethnological research during his Basel years contributed significantly to his anti-Eurocentrism, Figl goes one step further by seeking to trace the transcultural tendency in the high school and university education the young Nietzsche received. This reconstruction, in my opinion, is the most valuable part of *NR*. For this subject is, in spite of its great importance for our understanding of Nietzsche's religious thought (as Figl shows in his book), barely touched on in Nietzsche scholarship.

In order to paint a vivid picture of Nietzsche's religious education, Figl delves into a diverse range of primary and secondary sources, which include Nietzsche's school essays, philological publications, and posthumous notations (as the editor of *KGW I*, Figl has extensive knowledge of the entire body of Nietzsche's early writings); the books in the library of Schulpforta and in Nietzsche's personal library that may have influenced the young Nietzsche; the textbooks he used; the yearly reports of the programs of study at Pforta; and the manuscripts of the notes Nietzsche made of the lectures he attended. Believing that the research of Nietzsche's teachers (Karl August Koberstein, Wilhelm Corsen, Karl Heinrich August Steinhart, et al.) was integrated, more or less, into their classes, Figl also draws attention to their academic publications, which cover such topics as comparative grammar and the influence of Asia on the Platonic tradition. The value of these materials, according to Figl, is much more than biographical; they provide information concerning the context of Nietzsche's thought and can sometimes correct previous misunderstandings of him. Figl's historical investigation has revealed, for example, that Nietzsche's first encounter with Zarathustra can be traced back to his reading of Welter's *Lehrbuch der Weltgeschichte* at Schulpforta—much earlier than was long supposed (*NR*, 71–72), and that, contra Montinari's presumption that Nietzsche mentioned Zoroaster (alias Zarathustra) for the first time in 1870/1, the name Zoroaster appeared in Nietzsche's philological notations as early as 1867 (*NR*, 164–65). Without denying that there are racist and Eurocentric elements in the textbooks Nietzsche used, Figl argues that these ideological prejudices are minimized by the image of the world conveyed in the philological-historical research of the nineteenth century that Nietzsche's teachers communicated in their classes (and especially the research in the emerging field of Indo-European studies)—an image of the world in which Eastern culture is rendered of great worth (*NR*, 5). On the basis of an examination of Koberstein's manuscripts and Nietzsche's notes of Corsen's lecture on history, Figl argues that Nietzsche gained some acquaintance with comparative linguistics, and more importantly, with the comparative approach to culture and religion while at Pforta (*NR*, 105ff. and 117ff.).

As mentioned earlier, Figl attempts to locate Nietzsche's engagement with religions in the broader context of the establishment of *Religionswissenschaft* as an independent discipline in the mid-nineteenth century. Figl points out that, contrary to what Andreas Urs Sommer suggests, Nietzsche did use the term "*Religionswissenschaft*," and that as early as 1868, Nietzsche had a clear concept of *Religionswissenschaft*, which was largely shaped by the work of figures such as Georg Curtius and Max Müller (*NR*, 202–14). Inspired by the conception of philology as *Altertumswissenschaft*, Curtius stressed that philology was not aimed at merely studying ancient texts, but designed as the study of the entirety of ancient culture, including ancient religions (*NR*, 218–19). On Figl's reading, the idea that "the plurality of religions corresponds to the plurality of languages" is already explicit and central in Nietzsche's concept of *Religionswissenschaft* (*NR*, 211). From Curtius and Müller, Nietzsche learned how comparative religion, an important branch of *Religionswissenschaft*, models

itself on comparative linguistics (NR, 219–27). According to Figl, this comparative approach can constitute a ground for multiculturalism, which rejects a singular understanding of culture.

That said, what Figl offers, it must be stressed, is an oversimplified account of the early history of comparative studies as exemplified by the work of Müller. In fact, Müller's enthusiasm for the common origin of the Indo-European languages is connected with an intense interest in the *Urgeschichte* of the "Aryan" race. And his interpretation of myth aims to highlight the rationality of the ancestors of all European races, which would help to raise them, as Eric Csapo puts it, "well above the contemptible savages who inhabited other corners of the globe" (*Theories of Mythology* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2005], 22). Figl understates these unmistakably Eurocentric aspects of comparative studies. For example, after a several-page description of Curtius's transcultural perspective, only a very brief remark near the end of the second chapter hints at a fuller story, where Figl notes that Curtius used discriminatory terminology to characterize the non-European peoples (NR, 224).

NR touches upon several concepts central to Nietzsche's philosophy, such as "eternal recurrence" and "the death of God." Figl's study has made clear that these concepts were not fashioned ex nihilo; they were based on the fusion of various sources. In addition to Greek sources (for example, Heraclitus), there is an Indian source of "eternal recurrence." By referring to Nietzsche's notation 13[3], which includes terms such as "wheel, water blister, hollow curvature" (KGW III 3, 393), Figl argues that from his reading of Carl Friedrich Koeppen's book *Die Religion des Buddha* in the early 1870s, years before his intensive occupation with the idea of "eternal recurrence" in 1881, Nietzsche had learned about several Buddhist concepts, among which is the "cycle of existence" (*samsara*)—a Buddhist version of "eternal recurrence" (NR, 278–80). Figl also argues that the chief sources of inspiration for Nietzsche's theory of the death of God are, inter alia, Müller's *Essays* and Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (NR, 301–4). He is right to draw attention to Nietzsche's references to the death of Zeus, the death of Pan, and the death of Odin, which anticipate the famous statement by the madman in GS 125, and to emphasize that the theory of the death of God ties in with ancient polytheisms, as these references demonstrate (NR, 304–7). However, the so-called Zagreus myth, in which Dionysus Zagreus was murdered by the Titans and then restored to life, is not mentioned in NR, though it has a special relevance for Nietzsche's theory. For Nietzsche, this myth is a representative example of the older conception of gods as mortal, which contrasts with the later picture of the immortal Olympians.

In 2007, Figl also published a pamphlet of some 130 pages with the title *Nietzsche—Meditationen* (henceforth NM). Unlike NR, which is aimed at a specialist readership, this pamphlet is addressed to the general reader. Figl uses the term "meditation" not in the sense of certain religious practices, but in the sense of "contemplation." More precisely, he applies it to designate "the contemplation of existence and its meaning and purpose" (NM, 7). NM is subtitled "The Monastery, the Sea, and the New Infinity," not only because these three themes play prominent roles in Nietzsche's life and thought, but also because they are, as Figl states in the preface, "significant life experiences" for his wife to whom this book is dedicated (NM, 1).

Figl divides his pamphlet into two major parts. The biographically oriented first part gives a brief survey of Nietzsche's experiences regarding the monastery, the sea, and infinity. According to Figl, Nietzsche's six years at Pförsch left him with a deeply imprinted understanding of the monastery, which emphasizes order, spirituality, intellectuality, and a combination of contemplative and practical life. Figl points out that Nietzsche, during a stay in Sorrento, established with his friends a kind of community that resembled such a monastery. After showing there is a close relationship between Nietzsche's philosophy and nature by presenting his experiences of the sea in Sorrento, Figl turns to the conception of the new infinity for which the sea is used as a metaphor. With this conception, he refers to individual life seen from the new perspective of the "eternal recurrence." In the second part of this book, which was originally written for the radio broadcast "Gedanken zum Tag," Figl attempts a very general introduction to Nietzsche's central ideas and seeks to show how fertile these ideas can be for rethinking some serious problems of human existence, such as

the meaning of death. In order to offer a useful resource to accompany his interpretation, after this brief introduction, Figl gives select original texts, which are conveniently organized with respect to the three key themes, in the appendix.

Nietzsche und die Religionen is a substantial contribution to our understanding of Nietzsche. It will be of interest to all Nietzsche scholars and to students of the history of scholarship. And *Nietzsche—Meditationen* is a welcome attempt to write in a manner intelligible to the general reader and to make Nietzsche's philosophy accessible to all.

Jing Huang
Free University of Berlin
jinghuang.berlin@gmail.com

André Martins, Homero Santiago, and Luís César Oliva, eds., *As ilusões do eu—Spinoza e Nietzsche* [*The Illusions of the I—Spinoza and Nietzsche*]. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2011. 602 pp. ISBN: 978-85-200-1017-4. Paper, R\$62.00.

Ana Claudia Gama Barreto, Danilo Bilate, and Tiago Mota da Silva Barros, eds., *Spinoza e Nietzsche—filósofos contra a tradição* [*Spinoza and Nietzsche—Philosophers Against the Tradition*]. Rio de Janeiro: Mauad X, 2012. 208 pp. ISBN: 978-85-7478-363-5. Paper, R\$49.50.

As ilusões do eu—Spinoza e Nietzsche [*The Illusions of the I—Spinoza and Nietzsche*] and *Spinoza e Nietzsche—filósofos contra a tradição* [*Spinoza and Nietzsche—Philosophers Against the Tradition*] are products of the second Spinoza & Nietzsche International Congress held at the University of São Paulo during the second semester of 2009. This congress is one of the results of the collaboration between Brazilian and French universities under the heading of the Capes-Cofecub program: "Crises and Anathemas of Philosophic Modernity: Spinoza and Nietzsche as Schisms in the Metaphysics of Subjectivity."

These collections of essays are timely as they contribute to a growing research interest in the comparative study of Spinoza and Nietzsche. The fact that these volumes are collections of essays has the advantage that the reader can find within them interesting articles on a number of important topics in Spinoza and Nietzsche scholarship. However, it also means that there is no single guiding thread running through the books and that not all articles are immediately relevant to the themes announced by the titles of the books. Only a small number of contributions address the question of the relation between Spinoza and Nietzsche directly. This is noted by the editors of *The Illusions of the I* in the preface (15): "The diversity of the texts is intentional and desirable: we do not seek to offer the reader a single interpretation, but, to the contrary, a picture of the effervescence of current academic research."

The Illusions of the I contains twenty-five articles, grouped into three sections. The first section is dedicated to the task of investigating Nietzsche's debt to Romanticism and, more specifically, to elucidating how Nietzsche read Spinoza through the Romantics. In the first article of the volume, Eduardo Nasser places Nietzsche's philosophy in the context of his reaction to Romanticism. The crucial question that Nasser asks is who Nietzsche counts under the heading of Romantics. The answer includes not only the German but also the French Romantics, together with all of German philosophy and even Epicurus and Christ (25). The author emphasizes that the criteria that determine what counts as Romantic are not purely historical, but psychological and physiological. Nasser argues that Nietzsche is indebted to Goethe's distinction and contrast between classical and Romantic art, which he reformulates as the dichotomy between expressions of vital abundance and impoverished life. The complex arguments of this essay set the background for the rest of the essays in this section. Most important for the overarching theme of this book, it provides the context for André Martins's

investigation of Spinoza's influence on Nietzsche through the medium of German Romanticism. Martins places particular emphasis on the use made of Spinoza's philosophy by the Romantics in their attempt to go beyond the limits of knowledge set by Kant. The Romantics interpreted Spinoza's famous notion of the third kind of knowledge as a privileged way of access to the divine essence of nature. Martins takes Nietzsche's valuation of art over reason, science, or logic to be the result of Nietzsche's debt to Romanticism (126), but he does not sufficiently explore (1) the question of whether this emphasis on art over science and reason is constant through all of Nietzsche's work or (2) whether this justifies his claim that Spinoza's philosophy is at the origin of Nietzsche's. Nietzsche had access to Spinoza's work through sources other than the Romantics, and it is not immediately clear that he accepted the Romantic interpretation of the third type of knowledge as mystical or even aesthetic. Arguably more persuasive is Martins's grouping of Spinoza and Nietzsche against Schopenhauer's pessimism and his qualification of existence as evil. Together with Spinoza, Nietzsche affirms life and the necessity of existence and is engaged in a critique of religion, morality, and metaphysics grounded in his project of life affirmation.

The second section deals with Spinoza's and Nietzsche's stances vis-à-vis modernity and considers how Spinoza's philosophy can be a precursor to Nietzsche's critique of modernity. Lurent Bove's "The Right to Decision in Spinoza and the Questions of the Political 'Subject'" takes up Spinoza's critique of free will and subjectivity and investigates its reverberations throughout Spinoza's political philosophy. He unfolds the consequences of Spinoza's ontology of power and virtue for the constitution and empowerment of the state. This contribution is complemented by Maria Luisa Ribeiro Ferreira's article, "Spinoza: An Ecologist Avant la Lettre?" Ferreira shows how Spinoza's critique of the notions of subject, anthropomorphism, and teleology does not commit him to the excesses of deep ecology. The author argues convincingly that, starting from Spinoza's dynamic ontology of power, the absence of a real distinction between humans and animals does not imply an equality of power and therefore of right. Ferreira reminds us that Spinoza valued only one community, that of humans.

This section is completed by a number of essays addressing Nietzsche's relation to modernity. Scarlett Marton and Vânia Dutra de Azeredo both focus on deconstructing various narratives of Nietzsche's place in modernity. Azeredo, in her "Nietzsche and Modernity: A Turning Point," argues that Nietzsche represents a new dimension in philosophy by conceptualizing human production as interpretation and by referring to the body in his analysis of signification. This thesis is situated against the background of Habermas's claim that Nietzsche's critique of reason and appeal to the will to power ultimately reestablish the claims of objectivity and morality. This article explores the crucial themes of interpretation and the body in Nietzsche, but it does not fully engage with the limits of Nietzsche's turn to the body.

The essays by Wilson Antonio Frezzatti Jr., "The Belief in Progress: Civilization and Darwinism as Symptoms of Decadence," and Céline Denat, "The Nietzschean Conception of Modern Man or Modernity as 'Critical' Moment of History," both consider Nietzsche's critique of modernity. Frezzatti approaches the issue from the point of view of Nietzsche's engagement with Darwinism and his critique of the belief in progress in evolution. The author contrasts Nietzsche's understanding of high culture as the result of creative action and as a symptom of powerful impulses with his view of civilization as decadence and domestication of impulses. The focus on biology constitutes the strength of the essay, but it is also limiting insofar as it obscures Nietzsche's hope that modernity may contain the possibility of its own cure. This line of thought is taken up by Denat, who acknowledges that modern man for Nietzsche is characterized by a lack of vitality, nihilism, a loose pulsional structure without hierarchy and by understanding knowledge as a goal in itself, without any usefulness for life. Denat, however, goes beyond this diagnosis in emphasizing how what Nietzsche calls the historical sense (*GS* 337, *BGE* 224) can be used to strengthen modern man in order to overcome mediocrization. In overcoming the moment of crisis that is modernity, Denat underlines how the historical sense can lead to experimentation with possibilities not yet explored.

Werner Stegmeier's article, "Spinoza's Inconsistency?," a reissuing of a 2009 article that appeared in *Nietzsche-Studien*, is a much needed contribution to the question of determining Nietzsche's sources for his knowledge of Spinoza. Stegmeier explores Nietzsche's reading of Trendelenburg's view on Spinoza and how this influenced Nietzsche's criticism of Spinoza on the issues of teleology and self-preservation. Contrary to those who focus on Nietzsche's reading of Fischer's account of Spinoza, Stegmeier points out that it is Trendelenburg who speaks of an inconsistency in Spinoza's system, an inconsistency between Spinoza's denial of teleology and the apparently teleological nature of conatus. Stegmeier then goes on to question this understanding of Spinoza as inconsistent and to argue that Spinoza and Nietzsche are much closer than Nietzsche seems to think with regard to their denial of teleology. Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that recent Spinoza scholarship has questioned the presumed antiteleological nature of conatus and that it is possible that Trendelenburg's and Nietzsche's intuition on this point may be accurate.

The third section focuses on the notion of subjectivity as a key concept of modernity. The premise of this section is that the critique of the concept of subjectivity is a project shared by Spinoza and Nietzsche. Marilena Chaui begins her fascinating article, "An Interesting Anachronism," by reminding us that Spinoza's use of the concept of subject should not be confused with accounts of subjectivity familiar to us in the wake of German idealism and phenomenology. Her argument centers on the claim that seventeenth-century philosophy is not one of subjectivity and that the subject is understood as substance, as the substratum that supports qualities and of which properties are predicated. The merits of this essay lie in placing Spinoza's concept of subject in its intellectual environment, as well as in tracing modern departures from it. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether Spinoza's understanding of the subject as an objective essence renders the possibility of thinking interiority impossible in Spinozistic terms.

This thread is picked up by Chantal Jaquet in "From the I to the Self: The Re-founding of Interiority in Spinoza." Her argument is that, in spite of the uses of the word "subject" throughout the *Ethics*, Spinoza does understand the "I" as self-referential, as the capacity to refer one's ideas and affects to oneself. The increase in adequate knowledge implies an increase in self-consciousness, that is, referring ideas and affects to one's own nature as their adequate cause. The argument of this essay is not aimed at comparing Spinoza's notion of interiority with others and so evaluating to what extent his is a satisfactory account of interiority. Rather, it is aimed at showing how Spinoza undermines the absolute difference between interiority and exteriority and thus creates an understanding of the self that breaks down the classical distinction between inside and outside.

Another important theme that is tackled in this volume is the relation between the "I" and the corporeal self. With regard to Spinoza, Pascal Severac, in "The Power of Imagination in Spinoza," emphasizes the active power of imagination. He convincingly shows that imagination is not responsible for error, but is useful in increasing our power of acting. In this context, Severac argues that imagination always includes an idea of our own body and therefore its power. Blaise Benoit, in "Nietzsche and the Critique of the Metaphysics of the Subject: Towards a Corporeal 'Self,'" argues against Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche. Benoit suggests that the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics is aimed at a reorientation of the relation between the self and the world and, most important, at obtaining a renewed connection of the subject to its body. The argument of the essay is that the critique of the apparent unity of the subject does not lead Nietzsche to believe that the subject is a worthless illusion. Nietzsche's targets, rather, are the metaphysical assumptions that stand behind the specific notion of subject that Western thought has employed so far.

The focus of this book, as it appears prominently in its last two sections, is on a number of themes shared by Spinoza and Nietzsche: their critiques of metaphysics, the nature of subjectivity, and their stances toward the philosophy of the subject in modernity. While the individual contributions, not all of which could be mentioned here, raise extremely pertinent questions, the collection as a whole is not always forthcoming in offering direct comparisons between the two philosophers. The similarities and differences are most often implicit, and it is up to the readers to use the wealth of

material presented in this book in order to reach their own conclusions. In sum, this is an excellent collection of articles that must be consulted by anyone trying to understand the multifaceted relation between Spinoza's and Nietzsche's philosophies.

The second book considered in this review, *Spinoza and Nietzsche—Philosophers Against the Tradition*, is organized into three sections, each containing contributions that treat Spinoza's and Nietzsche's analyses and critiques of three major themes: transcendence, unity, and servitude. Due to the limited length of this review, I address in detail only three contributions dealing with Nietzsche, one for each of the sections of this book.

In "Nietzsche, Life and Nihilism," which appears in the "Against Transcendence" section, Ana Claudia Gama Barreto argues that Nietzsche's concept of life serves a dual purpose: in Nietzsche's critical project, it is used in order to diagnose decadent values and nihilism, and in Nietzsche's affirmative project, it contributes to the reevaluation of all values through the affirmation of life. Barreto starts by tracing Nietzsche's account of the history of nihilism, beginning with Platonism and Christianity and their devaluation of life in favor of an "ideal" world. The author argues that in Nietzsche's view Schopenhauer brings the development of nihilism to its conclusion by denying the existence of another world, while simultaneously advocating the denial of life. In order to define the nature of nihilism, Barreto quotes *GM* III:14, where Nietzsche describes nihilism as the conjunction of profound nausea and great pity for man. She explains the concept of nausea to be the disgust felt by humans toward themselves when they become aware that their highest values are contingent creations and not unconditioned and eternal. Nevertheless, she does not delve into an explanation of the concept of pity and its role in the economy of what Nietzsche understands to be nihilism. Under the acknowledged influence of Deleuze, Barreto understands the project of the affirmation of life as the elimination of nihilism in all its aspects from thought through the creation of new values. The author argues that a particularly impressive element of Nietzsche's thinking is his appeal to readers to create their own values, free of the illusions of metaphysics, utilitarianism, and Christianity.

In "Nietzsche and the Problem of the Semantic Insufficiency of Communication," which appears in the second section, "Against Unity," Renato Nunes Bittencourt investigates Nietzsche's analysis of language and its effects on our thinking. Bittencourt's concern is to bring out the reasons for Nietzsche's belief that language leads to the negation of life rather than empowerment and affirmation. This discussion is framed in opposition to the realist view of language present in Plato's *Cratylus*, where a legitimate connection between things and their denominations is advocated. Nietzsche's point, as Bittencourt argues, is that linguistic designation is a simplifying, reductive operation that indicates a hiatus between the plurality of lived experiences and the capacity to formulate them. While it is impossible to get to truth or essence in language, we are mistakenly led to believe that the structure of the world presented by language reflects a world of essences, a true world. The metaphysical illusions present in language are a misinterpretation of reality and are presuppositions for the pretension to a rational and scientific discourse.

Bittencourt traces Nietzsche's analysis of the insufficiency of language to a critique of the function of language, namely communication. Something that is rare or uncommon cannot be communicated and therefore does not find its way into language. This shows how the need to communicate present in human beings, taken as gregarious animals, profits from the reductive nature of language in order to create a common language. The unwelcome consequence, however, is that language is unable to convey the nature of reality and serves rather to impoverish our understanding of it. This analysis of language highlights the human dependency on the ideal of objective, universal truth in the communicative process. While Bittencourt's description of the difficulties associated with language brings out salient points in Nietzsche's philosophy, it raises the worry that an exclusive focus on Nietzsche's critique of language, objectivity, and reason may suggest a view of Nietzsche as an irrationalist who is not entitled and does not desire to make any claims outside of a purely subjective or relative perspective.

Márcia Rezende de Oliveira's article, "Nietzsche and the Possibility of Great Health," which appears in the third part of the volume, "Against Servitude," looks at Nietzsche's ideal of the "redeeming man" found in *GM* II:24. The discussion is situated in the context of Nietzsche's project of a revaluation of all values and the overcoming of bad conscience and decadent values. More specifically, de Oliveira's article investigates the role played by the notion of great health in the economy of Nietzsche's concept of the redeeming man and his analysis of values. The author shows how Nietzsche considers values to be symptoms of psychophysiological states. In order to accomplish the project of the revaluation of all values, the project must be understood in physiological, rather than purely intellectualist, terms. Using some of Nietzsche's later works, such as the *Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*, the author argues that the notion of great health stands for the capacity to adopt various perspectives without becoming sick. It consists in having the ability both to diagnose sickness and to find the right cure. The main difficulty of the argument presented here is that the relation between values and their physiological background is not sufficiently explored. This relation is articulated in a number of ways that do not seem to be easily reconcilable. For instance, de Oliveira writes that Nietzsche shows the parallelisms between values and the body that creates them (199). In other words, Nietzsche investigates the corporeal conditions under which these values were created. While these parallelisms can be construed to mean that values are symptoms of bodily states (199), it is less clear how it agrees with the statement that "in Nietzsche, there is no distinction between body and intellect" (202).

This volume is a highly useful introduction to a comparative study of Spinoza and Nietzsche. It provides invaluable help to the reader by identifying, both in the preface and in the titles of each section, topics of great concern to both thinkers: free will, teleology, transcendence or the eternity of moral values (3). The essays gathered here can serve as a good starting point for further in-depth research. Unfortunately, it is not always clear what the individual contributions add to already existing Spinoza and Nietzsche scholarship, and their usefulness for further study is somewhat diminished by the fact that the authors do not, in all cases, engage with relevant secondary literature.

Razvan Ioan
Leiden University
r.ioan@umail.leidenuniv.nl